Why P.P.P. Boycotts B.G. Commission

Page 4

February 1954

Caribbean News 6d.

JAMAICA UNION IN FIGHT FOR MORE WAGES

New Sugar Union Wins Support—after TUC break

AN increasing number of Jamaica's agricultural workers are now rallying to the support of the six month old Sugar and Agricultural Workers' Union which is affiliated to the Jamaica Federation of Trade Unions. This union has made a demand for an overall increase of wages by 33⅓% or by 4d. in the 1/- for members on the estates affected.

Alarmed by this rivalry to his decaying Industrial Trade Union, the demagogue Bustamente threatened to introduce legislation to prevent recognition of this new trade union. But so strong has been the support from the workers that the decision of the registrar of Trade Unions to accept its registration has been no surprise to those who have viewed its steady progress since its inception. Already it has won a majority of the workers on the 12 largest of the 20 major sugar estates.

★ Continued on page 5

INDIA GIVES BIG WELCOME TO JAGAN AND BURNHAM — See Story Page 3

Cheddi Jagan and L.F.S.Burnham with Premier Nehru

WELCOME BACK BILLY! With a fresh burst of energy and enthusiasm Billy Strachan Secretary of the Caribbean Labour Congress (London Branch) has returned after a long spell in hospital, to take up his old fighting job. Billy has been secretary of the CLC(L/B) since its foundation in May 1948.
Glad to have you back!

Trinidad Leader was Detained in Scotland

LEAVING the British Isles recently on their return to the West Indies two of the British Caribbean delegates— John La Rose, Trinidad and Tobago, Hon. E.T. Joshua, St. Vincent, were subjected to a rigorous search at Prestwick airport in Scotland. The B.O.A.C. plane in which they were travelling was delayed for half an hour while the Prestwick security officers went through the baggage of John La Rose.

In spite of protest they took from an old address book the addresses of British friends some of whom were in no way connected with the working class struggle.

Back in Trinidad all the typewritten and handwritten matter belonging to the Hon. E. T. Joshua was seized and searched. They were returned to him on the day he left for St. Vincent only as a result of vigorous protest and his refusal to leave until his materials were returned to him. La Rose was searched for three hours and his things taken from him for further examination. Even three childen's story books were seized for so-called examination. Up to the 4th January, the Customs has failed to return the things taken for examination.

In a letter to the Comptroller of Customs and Excise, La Rose has charged that the Customs Department is being conveniently used by the Security Police to get information. He pointed out that Security police were present at the searches and challenged the Comptroller to institute an enquiry into the situation.

Ram Karran, a Guianese delegate to the W.F.T.U. Congress, escaped the bans in Trinidad, but a gripful of books was confiscated by the Trinidad Customs officials on the grounds that they had found a banned publication in the grip. Ram Karan has denied that he had any banned publication in his grip. (C.P.N.S.).

Rance wants £120,000 for troops —but Cuts Children's Free Milk

SPEAKING at a meeting of the Caribbean Labour Congress (London Branch) last month, Mr. John La Rose, of the Trinidad West Indian Indepedence Party, revealed that cuts had been ordered in the government subsidy of free milk at certain schools. Meanwhile £120,000 was blandly earmarked for a B.W.I. Regiment.

On housing, Mr. La Rose explained that 70% of Trinidad's workers were employed in the sugar and oil industries. Hence workers affected by housing problems are mainly those on estates as tenants or oil-workers.

...Workers in these, the two most profitable industries, sometimes live in hovels 10 x 10 with families of from three to nine.

Mr. John La Rose

Trinidad's Money

ELSEWHERE in this issue we read of plans to send Mr. Dalley of the T.U.C. and of the I.C.F.T.U., naturally, to visit Trinidad to give the Trade Unions the once-over.

Simultaneously we read in the London Press that: "the directors of TRINIDAD LEASEHOLD LTD. intend to raise the total dividend for 1952/53 to 20% by increasing the final payment to 15% from 11-2/3% of last year".

This would be nice talk if it were for the oil field workers. But it does not take much reading to see who is concerned. The finance columns talk of £1,639,452 previously pinched from the workers being 'capitalised'. "Treasury consent to the issue has been obtained". This further identifies shareholders of TRINIDAD LEASEHOLDS LTD. with British Government policy.

* * *

Look at the swag—£1,774,652 NETT PROFIT, after all charges, including taxation, and after transferring £101,056 to contingencies reserves.

Now why associate Mr. Dally's visit with big profits?

It is not a long story. Last year the oil field workers fought hard and won a small increase in hourly wage rates.

Well, somebody is scared and rightfully so, too. Look out, the communist bogey is going to be well splashed and Mr. Dalley is well-known for his **anti-**communism.

Communism or anti-communism, here is the news of exorbitant profits straight from London's Tory Press. Oilfield workers now know **from where** and **how much** there is to be had when they make demands this year—1954.

* * *

TRINIDAD SUGAR ESTATES:—things are looking up. Increased dividends to 7½% per cent from 5% last year.

Nett profits rose from £8,568 last year to the staggering amount of £54,734.

Whew! it looks as if the sugar workers are going to want some more, too—do you wonder why?

* * *

Oilworkers' wages vary between 2/6 to 8/8 per day, while agricultural workers average £7.10.0 per month.

Due to Labour pressure after the War, a committee (Landlord-dominated) was set up, but they ruled that new houses should not be subject to the Rent Restriction Ordinance.

"This move", he remarked, increased rents and people were paying 'rewards' to get houses. After a grant of nearly £1,800,000, it was found that only 8,106 persons benefited!"

His Party demanded that around £8,000,000 be provided over a period of five years for a working class housing project. He was confident that the money could be raised by the reimposition of the Excess Profits tax, and increased royalties on oil.

"Sorry—full up"

Illiteracy in Trinidad is 37.6%, due to children not attending schools. Compulsory education meant nothing because the schools cannot cope with the number of children wishing to attend.

Quite often a school built for 300 pupils is taking as many as 800.

Free milk is provided at some schools, but recently the Director of Education has ordered a cut to be made in the government subsidisation of milk for schools. This move has met with strong objections from the West Indian Independence Party.

Unemployment is one of Trinidad's most pressing problems. Mr. La Rose pointed out that in the post-war boom, Trinidad's unemployed numbered 18% of the working population, and he compared this with the unemployed figure of 13% in Britain during the depression of 1926.

His Party was pledged to enact an unemployment insurance scheme whereby each unemployed person shall receive a minimum of one guinea per week. They proposed to the government that the £120,000 earmarked for reviving a West India Regiment be used to inaugurate this scheme,

Concluding, Mr. La Rose said he wished to give 'the lie' to Lyttelton's charges that no protests from the West Indian Labour movement reached him following the abrogation of Guiana's constitution.

Immediately the news reached Trinidad, his Party cabled protests to Lyttelton, and along with the Trinidad and Tobago Trades Council organised mass meetings and forwarded protests to the governor for transmission to the Colonial Office in London.

His Party stands solidly behind the P.P.P. in Guiana and will do all they can to promote West Indian unity and further the fight for independence and federation.

More West Indians BANNED

147 different kinds of undesirable immigrants have been banned from entering Trinidad, states an order issued last November.

This Order, states Mr. Maurice Dorman, the colonial secretary, indicates that the government does not intend any change in its existing policy of keeping local jobs for local men.

Journalists have alleged that this order was introduced with the specific intention of deporting Mr. David Nelson of St. Kitts, political correspondent of the "Trinidad Guardian" and an outspoken critic of the administration.

This view is substantiated by the fact that a critical skit on Legislative Council proceedings in mid-1951, by Mr. C. Walters, an English journalist, led to a hullaballoo from "offended" legislators.

Mr. Nelson came to Trinidad in 1950 and in November 1953 the government refused to renew his permit. Subsequently he was granted a 14-day permit but banned from working. The two cases of Mr. Walters and Mr. Nelson should recall to Jamaicans the case of Mr. Roger Mais and his column "Now we know".

The Government's actions also recall the deportation of Captain Mussons, an English journalist and his wife, a Guianese, in 1952. The Mussons were awarded damages. Mr. Nelson is fighting his case in court.

Behind the kicking-outs is Rance, "architect of Federation".

★ EDITORIAL ★

A NEW YEAR DAWNS

THE past year has been a very full and momentous one for the West Indies. Many important far-reaching steps have been taken, both by the people in their strivings for elementary rights and freedom, and also by our rulers.

The people's movement reached its high-point when on April 27th the Guianese people elected the P.P.P.

In Trinidad we have seen the consolidation and maturing of the new West Indian Independence Party and the unity displayed in the tremendous May Day demonstration.

Despite set-backs of the movement in Jamaica helped by the splitting and re-splitting of the Left, we see in the new Jamaica Federation of Trade Unions the possibility of a revival of the movement on correct lines.

The people of St. Vincent are on the move with the militant leadership of Joshua. And in spite of police repression, Joshua and the Peoples Political Party move from strength to strength.

Barbados—the stronghold of Grantely Adams—sees the birth of the C.P.A., a new political party with a programme for Independence and Federation.

But side by side with the growth of the people's movements, the imperialist forces have stepped up their repressive actions, from the pettifogging bans against certain publications and persons to the zenith so far of their infamy—the sudden expulsion of the democratically elected government of Guiana. In this particular action we saw more clearly than in any other the brutal face of British imperialism

Our people need not feel helpless or downhearted when opposed by such seemingly formidable forces. Now is not the time for hopelessness. We must remember that had not we ourselves been becoming a challenge to imperialism, the colonialists would never have worried us. In fact it is the West Indian people who are steadily becoming stronger, and not British Imperialism, which gets weaker insofar as we colonial people become stronger. How have we become stronger when we don't have guns and bullets to defend ourselves?

Our strength lies first of all in our unity, in our understanding, and our striving for our common goal —political independence and federation—which open the way to a fuller and happier life.

We shall have to meet the British boss class, their Lytteltons and gun boats with greater resolve, unity, and experience.

We can take courage and strength from the knowledge that the great majority of the British working class are on our side, as shown in the striking sympathy with Guiana and indignation displayed at the Tory Government's action. But the British working people do not yet see the power of united action of their class. The strike action and movement now stirring in Britain can be taken as a pointer of things to come. The British working class are the natural allies of the West Indian people, despite the fact that at presnt it is the colonial people who are at the front in the anti-imperialist struggle.

We wish our readers and the whole West Indian people a happy new year, knowing full well that if this is not to remain a meaningless phrase, we shall all have to put our efforts into the struggle for our Happy New Year, and the happier new years to come. Our future is in our hands.

The British rulers are showing by their actions that they do not mean to tolerate the slightest expression of democratic opinion from the colonial people, and their leaders when and if they stand up for the rights of their people.

Buganda and Guiana

In Malaya they used the excuse of "bandits", in Kenya "Mau Mau". In British Guiana where they could not dream of using any of these excuses, they brought out the "red plot" bogey-man. Then came along the Kabaka of Buganda, and even the "red-bogey" could not fit in. So they just whisked the Kabaka off in a plane to comfortable London quarters and that's that. It must be remembered that the Kabaka is no "left revolutionary", but was only pressed by his people into asking for Buganda to be reverted to the domain of the Foreign Office as of right rather than the Colonial Office.

This is an attack not so much on the Kabaka as on the Buganda people whom the Kabaka was forced to represent—or lose their support.

If the leaders of the P.P.P. in British Guania were too "left", what fault did Lyttelton find with the Kabaka? Was he too "right"?

We think this is a lesson that can well be taken by those who, well-intentioned, but nevertheless think that somehow by going a bit "slower" the P.P.P. could have brought benefits for the people while at the same time fooling Lyttelton that they weren't—that they were just good statesmen like Bustamente, Gomes and Manley, and Nkrumah of the Gold Coast. Indeed, it is worth while noticing that Lyttelton has not moved into action to send gunboats and troops to that "model" colony where investigations have been going on concerning charges of corruption and bribary involving high ministers including Nkrumah.

No, its only when you champion the rights of the common people against the big foreign and local plunderers that you run the risk of being deposed.

STAND FIRM BY GUIANA
— says JOSHUA of ST. VINCENT

EVERY West Indian must rally to the support of the Guianese against Imperialism. Intimidation will only serve to forge a feeling of unity that will survive long after this crisis is forgotten.

Hon. E. T. Joshua, member of the Legislative and Executive Council of St. Vincent and President of the People's Political Party of that island, made these two points the crux of the talk he delivered to the Caribbean Labour Congress (L.B.) in November last year.

"What is democracy in the West Indies?" he asked. "To me it could be better described as 'the mockery-we-see'.

"We awake as if from a stupor to find that our very elementary democratic rights are taken from us. Bans are imposed on West Indians travelling to and from various territories, the Guianese have had their Constitution suspended, and we look across the waters to Kenya and find that what the British imperialists are doing there were the same things they condemned the Nazis for doing.

Propaganda

"The British people", he continued, "are fed on the propaganda of the capitalist press representing vested interests in the colonies, and so many are ignorant of the real conditions there. I have not got enough fingers to count the struggles of the British working class for a better way of life," he went on, "and, for this reason, we need their support in our fight for better conditions in the colonies."

Referring to Manley and Bustamente, and to Grantley Adams of Barbados, he declared:

"Colonial governors have got so accustomed to seeing the people deprived of good virile leadership that whenever a son of the soil gets up to make a move they automatically put every obstacle in his way. It seems that only the lapdogs of imperialism can prosper . . . but the dawn is breaking and more and more West Indians are taking their place in the struggle.

Bosses' Rights

"The action of the imperialists in British Guiana was designed to secure the rights of the capitalists over the workers. This was demonstrated when the Guiana P.P.P. moved to secure recognition of representative trade unions there. We all know what has happened since . . . "

Comrade Joshua concluded by commending the CLC.(L.B.) on the fine job they were doing. He called upon all present to give the organisation their wholehearted support "in the interest of united and independent West Indies . . . "

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C.N. FUND

COMRADES, December total is only £3.9.9d—the lowest it's ever been since we launched the Fund in September.

I call upon all those with collecting cards to remember those friends who gave their sixpences and shillings in October, the month when we collected £11.7.11d, and see if we cannot reach a similar figure again.

Our special November issue has meant a very big outlay. Help make up for this in February! We must keep our paper going.

Send donations to

Anne Simms,
C.N. Fighting Fund,
41 Eresby Road, N.W.6

I CLENCH MY FIST

You come in warships terrible with death
I know your hands are red with Korean blood
I know your finger trembles on a trigger
And yet I curse you—stranger khaki clad!

British soldier, man in khaki
Careful how you walk,
My ancestor Accabre
Is groaning in his grave.
At night he wakes and watches
With fire in his eye
Because you march upon his breast
And stamp upon his heart.

Although you come in thousands from the sea
Although you walk like locusts in the street
Although you point your gun straight at my heart
I clench my fist above my head! I sing my song of freedom!

By MARTIN CARTER, WORKER-POET, P.P.P. LEADER. ONE OF THE IMPRISONED FIVE.

There were no issues for December and January due to heavy production of special November Anniversary No.

GUIANA'S LOYAL OPPOSITION

ON December 27th the Governor announced the appointment of the Interim Government which will continue until elections are permitted. The Governor nominated 24 persons to sit in the Legislative Council and an Executive of seven. The Executive includes three businessmen, two persons who were defeated at the last elections (one lost his deposit), the former Financial Secretary and the Leader of the Opposition in the deposed House of Assembly.

The Legislative Council includes the Manager of the Sugar Producers' Association and the directors of several Companies, five defeated candidates (four of whom lost their deposits at the last elections), two civil servants and the members of the opposition in the deposed House of Assembly. Sitting on the Executive and the Legislative Council are the Attorney General, Financial Secretary and the Colonial Secretary. The People's Progressive Party issued a press statement—

"The Party did not expect any of its representatives to be nominated to the Interim Government and would not have acceded to its members being nominated to the Legislature since it is commonly known that we have always fought against the nominated system. It is a decadent and bad form of government which is formed without the consent or choice of the people. It is a reflection on the ability of any people to choose rightly and well. Consequently, ever since our policy and programme were formulated, we have gone on record against the nominated system.

To this principle, as indeed to all our principles, we shall always firmly adhere. Sir Alfred's (the governer) refusal to nominate any P.P.P. members was not, however, due to our stand on this high and laudable principle. It was due, as he put it, to the fact that 'none of them has had the courage to openly declare himself or herself as opposed to communist influence which presently dominates the Party'.

Big Welcome for Jagan and Burnham in India

BIG welcomes have greeted Cheddi Jagan and L. F. S. Burnham, deposed leaders of the Guiana Government throughout their tour in India.

Their plane touched down at New Delhi shortly after midnight on November 20th, and as it taxied to a stop, cries of "Jagan Zindabad!" and "Burnham Zindabad!" from the people rent the air.

At a meeting presided over by Prime Minister Nehru in the Central Hall of Parliament, Dr. Jagan and Mr. Burnham addressed members of both Houses of Parliament. He appealed to the people of India to extend their fullest support to the freedom struggle of the people of Guiana.

Mr. Burnham expressed confidence in the ultimate victory of the people over "Colonial Obscurantism" and said his people had learnt a great deal from the struggles waged by the Indian people.

The "Hindustan Standard" of the 24th November 1953 reports the following comments by Premier Nehru: "Anyone with any degree of wisdom would naturally like to encourage the growth of people there not only for the people's good but for the good of the world. But unfortuately where vested interests are concerned it is very difficult for them to see things in the proper light or perspective."

In Delhi also, the P.P.P. leaders addressed Congress Workers of Delhi, students of Delhi University and a meeting of the Council of World Affairs. They spoke to students of D.A.V. College at Kanpur, attended a reception on behalf of different political organisations, and shortly before leaving for Allahabad they received a telegram from the Mayor of Calcutta informing that a civic reception was arranged for them.

Sincere Sympathy

In Calcutta a committee was set up to make arrangements for their visit. The committee issued a statement which said: "Naturally as a people who have stubbornly and ceaselessly fought against colonial rule for more than half a century, we have sincere sympathy and support for the people of British Guiana in their fight for national self-determination. A public meeting has been arranged on December 7th at 5 p.m. under the presidency of the Mayor of Calcutta so that the citizens may accord a fitting reception to the two leaders. We invite the citizens of Calcutta to muster strong at this reception meeting". The Mayor said that it was unfortunate that the Labour leaders in Britain did not give full support.

JANET JAGAN SAYS

"Here things go on as usual. Our activities are sharply cultailed, but we persist. The newspapers and Church are violent, but seem to have little effect. We have been checking on our support all over the country, and find it "**solid**". The Party is in a firm position and we have much more sympathy because of what has happened."

Still Restricted

Shortly after midnight, January 13th, the Governor ordered the release of the four P.P.P. men who were detained at Atkinson Field since October 24th. They are restricted to remain in the area of their residence and must report to the police twice a week. A similar order was served on Janet Jagan, General Secretary; Ramkarran, former member of the House of Assembly; Edwin Ramsarran and Eric Huntley.

GUIANA FIGHTS BACK WITH OPERATION BOYCOTT

FOLLOWING the arrival of troops in British Guiana and the suspension of the Constitution, the People's Progressive Party has inaugurated a campaign of non-co-operation, non-violence and boycott. They keep urging people to remain calm.

The non-co-operation campaign began with a strike call which was effective on all the sugar estates in the Colony. The city workers did not respond, due mainly to the fact that the Essential Services Act, which covers the nature of employment of most, would have caused them to lose their jobs by striking. Sugar estate strikes lasted about three weeks, with two estates refusing to go back to work until after approximately a month. These two estates are in the Corentyne, where Dr. Jagan was born.

Next move of the non-co-operation campaign was the use of the boycott. It began with a boycott of British goods, but since the country of origin of goods could not be easily distinguished, it became necessary to place the boycott against the big merchants who had taken open sides against the Party. Therefore, the slogan became: "BOYCOTT WATER STREET". This has mainly hit Booker Bros, McConnell & Co., and Fogarty's (a Director of Fogarty's, Mr. St. Dare, was one of the United Democratic Party's delegation to England). The boycott has been effective and has injured their retail trade. A second act in the campaign: "NO CONSTITUTION, NO CHRISTMAS" had been launched, urging the people not to buy heavily for Christmas in view of the many injustices.

COCA-COLA HIT

Another aspect of the boycott was a special appeal to boycott Coca-Cola. This was brought into the campaign because the Coca-Cola company handed over its lorries to assist the troops when they came to B.G. This boycott, too, has been effective, and there is a marked reduction in sales.

In view of the nature of the P.P.P's. campaign and its specific instructions to the Guianese people there have been no incidents of violence. However, there has been deliberate provocation by the police on many occasions.

At Buxton, birthplace of the Hon. Sydney King, a P.P.P. leader, police baton charged and clubbed members of a public meeting which had been called only after police permission was granted.

Small Notice Draws Big Crowd

MR. ASHTON CHASE, acting leader of the deposed P.P.P. Parliamentary Group received police permission for a meeting of the members on January 5th to discuss the Constitution Commission boycott. A small press release drew a crowd of over 5,000 who lined the streets near the meeting place to wave and cheer their leaders.

A lorry-load of police armed with batons was rushed to the scene, but the crowd remained in an orderly manner. While the former members were conferring inside the office the police came and revoked the permission informing members that they must disperse immediately or force would be used against them.

The demonstration of solidarity with the deposed leaders illustrated vividly the tremendous support and sympathy the Party holds. In contrast to this spontaneous demonstration, a scanty crowd assembled on the same day to witness the opening of the nominated (Interim Government) Legislative Council.

More reports coming into Party Headquarters indicate that the Party won over one dozen village elections. It received 100% victory in the Bloomfield-Letter Kenny elections in the Corentyne district.

Lyttelton's B.G. Commission

THREE men representing the British Imperial Government are now "ENQUIRING" in British Guiana, on the appointment of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Oliver Lyttelton, M.P. Their Secretary is a Mr. R. E. Radford, a publicly admitted servant of the Colonial Office.

Look at the background of these individuals: SIR JAMES ROBERTSON, K.B.E., born October 27th, 1899. This man's career will stamp him as one of the ruling class of the British people. He is from a family who was acceptable at Merchiston Castle School and Balliol College, Oxford University. This fitted him in later years for the most important and highest posts in Imperialism's military and civil service.

At Oxford he appears to have excelled at Rugger, After the First World War he was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the Black Watch Regiment of the British Army; next step—the Sudan Political Service (1922).

This is a typical background to officials who have been appointed District Commissioners in Britain's colonial territories. He has even been a Deputy Governor in the Gezira Province of the Sudan and is frequently associated with the much publicised cotton growing scheme in that area. This is the Tory version of co-operation in the Empire.

This career puts the Chairman of Lyttelton's commission in the right perspective. It is not mysterious, therefore, why the P.P.P. has firmly stood by its boycott.

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Robertson's colleagues include SIR DONALD EDWARD JACKSON, no new figure to the people of Bookers' Guiana.

From secondary education in Guiana, Jackson went on in the mid-20's to take a Bachelor of Laws degree at London University and was called to the Bar at the Middle Temple in 1927.

The barrister Jackson went on to practise in Guiana, sparing time to marry the eldest daughter of the late Walter Augustus Reynolds. Soon he was on the way up the legal ladder to be a magistrate in 1931, Acting Assistant Attorney General in 1933, Chief Justice Leeward and Windward Islands, and a Judge of the West Indian Court of Appeal in 1950.

In this setting one can understand Lyttelton's choice for a second commissioner. Britain's Secretary of State for the Colonies might know nothing of colonial affairs and good politics, but as a defender of profits in the business world he is second to none.

★ ★ ★

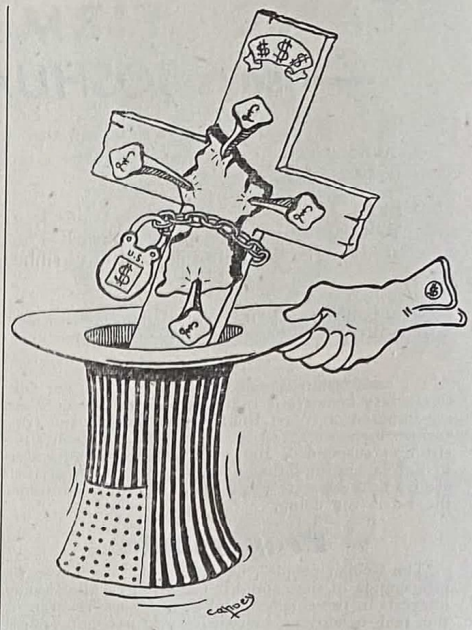
Now for the "enfant terrible", **"Brother" GEORGE WOODCOCK**, Assistant Secretary of the British T.U.C.

This odd by-product of the British labour movement started work in the cotton mills of Lancashire at the age of 12 years. The depressing conditions there soon swept him along into the workers' organisation and he joined up with the now Amalgamated Weavers' Association. This is one of the smaller trade unions of this type bearing no special history of ultra-militancy. From 1922 to 1927 he was an official of this body, making sure not to blot his copybook. Recognition was soon forthcoming and by 1929 he was off to Ruskin College on a T.U.C. Scholarship, then in 1930 to New College, Oxford University.

This is the type of trade union working-class education that sent "Brother" Woodcock to the Research Department of the T.U.C., which is the base of their Economic Committee.

Woodcock's reputation is such that the "Sunday Observer" (6/11/49) credits him as the architect of "the policy of a complete stop on wages" which was operated by the T.U.C. during the life of the late Labour Government. Mass revolt of the rank and file reversed this policy and Woodcock, who was expected to be a successor to Labour Lord Citrine, suffered another rebuff.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, commonly known as "the splitters", know their friends. Lionel Luckhoo. Grantley Adams and George Woodcock. He visited Santa Domingo in 1951 as a delegate of one of their reconnoitring missions, and by 1953 earned the grace of the Tory Government in the Coronation Honours List with a C.B.E.



British Guiana nailed to the cross

P.P.P. STATEMENT ON COMMISSION

Why Boycott?

ON the eve of the arrival of the "Robertson" Constitution Commission, we wish to announce that after full and careful consideration of all the circumstances, the People's Progressive Party see no useful purpose will be served in making representation to the Commission, and have consequently decided to boycott the Commission.

In suspending the Constitution on October 9th last, the Colonial Office made the following declaration: "H.M.'s Government has decided that the Constitution of British Guiana must be suspended to prevent Communist subversion of the Government and a dangerous crisis both in public order and economic affairs. The necessary Order in Council will shortly be laid before Parliament and an **independent** Commission of Enquiry appointed to 'report on what has happened' and to recommend a revised Constitution." The terms of reference of the Commission have been announced as "in the light of the circumstances which made it necessary to suspend the Constitution of British Guiana, to consider and to recommend what changes are required." It is clear as daylight therefore that in the terms of reference given to the Robertson Commission, Her Majesty's Government has departed from what was obviously a promise held out to the people of B.G. We are shocked at this shameful betrayal of trust which belittle the British sense of justice and fair play in the eyes of our people.

Farce

The Commission, according to its terms of reference, faces its task with an acceptance of the reasons for the suspension of the Constitution as being well founded. It is precluded from enquiring into those circumstances which gave rise to the suspension and determining whether the suspension was in fact justified. The Secretary of State for the Colonies' refusal to extend the terms of reference in the light of gross inaccuracies in the accusations against the elected representatives of the people circumscribes the work of the Commission and reduces it to a farce.

Mr. Oliver Lyttelton by his pronouncements in and out of the House of Commons has shown that he has already made up his mind as to the type of Constitution British Guiana should have. Nothing we can say will alter his already well laid plans to limit the power of the people's representatives in the interest of his monopolistic friends. It would therefore follow from his pronouncements that the Commission is merely a camouflage to give appearance that justice is being done. The weak composition of the Commission lends weight to this view.

The P.P.P. see no valid reason for the suspension of the Constitution and the deposing of the freely elected representatives of the people. In the circum-

continued on page 5

Sugar Union Support

● —— continued from page 1

Points from its demands for general improvement for the sugar workers include:—

(1) The wages at each estate to be brought up into line with the rate paid on the estate which has the highest rates within each grade.
(2) Overtime rates after eight hours on week days at time-and-a-half or rate-and-a-half, and on Sundays and Public Holidays double time or double rate.
(3) Vacation leave of 14 days per year for daily paid and task workers, and 21 days for weekly paid workers.

Members consulted

These demands were worked out by the union after conferences with the membership on various estates. The Union has circulated these proposals to the other Unions claiming to represent sugar workers, proposing that an effort should be made to reach agreement. Copies have also been circulated among the workers asking for further suggestions.

Contrary to Bustamante's policy of compromising with the Sugar Manufacturers to the detriment of the workers, the Sugar and Agricultural Workers Union have already proved that with honest leaders they intend to strive to improve the lot of the workers they represent.

Ever since the split in the once "progressive" P.N.P. with its affiliate the T.U.C., Jamaicans have looked for an alternative to these now reactionary groups.

Delegates walk out

The Jamaica Federation of Trade Unions was formed following a walk-out of over 40 delegates to the August congress of the Trades Union Congress. Disgusted above all by the barefaced "fixing" and bullying by which the Hill brothers sought to direct Congress, these delegates have formed a real worker's union, so long needed in Jamaica.

There are many examples of the "undemocratic" ways which the Hill brothers ran the Congress.
As President of the T.U.C., Hill made it noticeable that persons who were not elected in accordance with the Constitution were given delegates' credentials so that they could come and vote to support the policy of the Hill brothers. For example, the Municipal Branch delegates were chosen at a meeting held without proper notices at N.L.P. headquarters instead of the usual place, and the acting chairman of the Branch was not allowed to preside at the meeting although he tried to do so.

The Water Commission Branch held no meeting but delegates were appointed who could be trusted to support the Hills.

Other persons who were properly elected as delegates, but were known to be opposed to the Hills' policy, were not given their delegates' credentials.

Certain branches in the country such as the Worthy Park were wrongly informed of the number of delegates they could send or wrongly denied the right to send delegates at all on the ground of its inactivity, a ground not appled to Branches in Kingston which have not met for over a year.

Delegates and observers known to be opposed to the Hills' policy were intimidated at the outer gate of the Conference Hall by a group of paid armed gangsters. Credentials were snatched away from some persons who were pushed back into the street. Special passes were issued to political supporters and retainers of Ken Hill from West Kingston, who are not even members of the T.U.C.

In these ways the Conference was made 'safe' and a 'majority' was ensured to prevent any change of policy by a constitutional and democratic vote of the membership.

President's powers

Lastly, every Point of Order raised concerning the unconstitutional composition of the conference was overruled by Ken Hill in his capacity as President.

Workers of Sav-la-Mar, Frome and Worthy Park, formerly affiliated to the T.U.C. met and unanimously decided to secede from that union and seek membership, en bloc, in the Sugar and Agricultural Workers' Union of the J.F.T.U.

That Hills' selfish and bullying method has led to his unpopularity among the more "progressive" members of the T.U.C. is evident by the fact that many former branches of the T.U.C. area are arranging meetings to withdraw from the T.U.C. and form themselves into branches of the Industrial unions under which they fall.

Officers

Provisional leadership of the J.F.T.U. elected and assigned to organise the unions and convene a Congress in six months, are:—Richard Hart, ex-Vice President of the T.U.C., general secretary, Ferdinand Smith, President; Didimus Stephenson, Secretary of the Worthy Park branch T.U.C., First Vice President; Vernon Clarke, organiser and ex-executive officer of the T.U.C., Second Vice-President.

P.P.P. Statement

from page 4

stances, we are in no position to appear before the Commission and advocate as the sole premises of the Commission suggest a watering down of the "Waddington" Constitution and the curtailment of the political rights of the people of British Guiana.

Our position on the "Waddington" Constitution, on the contrary, has shown that we are clearly committed to advocate an even more advanced constitution. In our patriotic appeal, we demanded amendments to the Constitution (just suspended) along the following lines:

1. **The abolition of the Upper House.**
2. **The Governor should have no power to dissolve the House except on the approval of a two-thirds majority of the Lower House.**
3. **The vote at the age of eighteen years.**
4. **The removal of the three Civil Servant Officials, namely, the Chief Secretary, the Attorney General and the Financial Secretary and Treasurer from the House of Assembly and the Executive Council.**
5. **The recall by the courts of any representative for whose removal appeal is made to the Governor in Council by a two-thirds majority of the electors in the existing voters' list in respect of any district.**

They alone

If a new Constitution were needed, it is our view that the people of British Guiana should determine what the Constitution should be. As we stated in our memorandum to the Waddington Commission: "The People's Progressive Party feel that the inhabitants of B.G. like those of other parts of the world should be the final arbiters of their own destiny, and as such should be the architects of their own Constitution and not the recipients of a Constitution prepared elsewhere and by others. The latter alternative premises an inability on the part of the Guianese to choose what is best for them, and is out of keeping with modern democratic thought; advice and suggestions from outside may be helpful and, in some cases useful, but if Guianese are to be a "people" and not "colonials" they and they alone must decide on the form of Constitution they desire." Consequently, we feel that as in India and Burma, a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage, should be entrusted with the task of drafting any Constitution for British Guiana.

Insincerity

Moreover, the Commission will be deliberating at a time when freedom of meeting in British Guiana is sadly restricted by the Emergency Regulations which make it impossible for us to meet our members in particular and the public in general to ascertain their views and secure a mandate. We charge the British Government with insincerity in sending the Commission to sit at this time, without the Governor first removing the Emergency Regulations, the necessity for the existence of which is neither real nor apparent.

BILLY'S CORNER

A regular column by BILLY STRACHAN, Secretary of the Caribbean Labour Congress (London Branch).

Broken Bones in Dominica

LYING in hospital in London, a patient from the West Indies joined me. So what?

He broke his ankle, he fell from the roof of his house in Dominica.

X-Rays? Well the old machines in Roseau, capital of Dominica, are out of order. The new machines are not yet fitted up. Consequently the patient was pushed off to the next best place, Barbados.

Here he hired a doctor and was admitted to the best hospital in Bridgetown, chief town of Barbados. Board and lodgings now almost 7 guineas weekly, medical charges and fees additional. An orthopaedic surgeon was necessary to operate and reset the break, but at no price was one available. There just isn't any!

So the patient flies out via Canada and lands up next to me in Fulham, London.

Here's a fortunate West Indian, but this patient is not a West Indian. He represents a large British Company in Dominica and is therefore one of a handful of people of Barbados and Dominica out of a hundred thousand, privlleged to have a foot saved and to walk again.

As in the Gold Coast, the health of the common people bears no priority. New jails mushroom overnight, where hospitals and sanatoria could well stand. It is these colonies that Oliver Lyttelton and his Colonial Office set up as model administrations.

Any excuse, Governor Savage of Guiana, or my blue-eyed boy of Barbados—Grantley Adams?

Imperialism United

WHEN Premier Nehru of India welcomed Dr. Cheddi Jagan and Mr. L. F. S. Burnham of the Guiana P.P.P., imperialism's monster press moved fast and furiously.

In Bombay an English language news magazaine of obviously immense capital ran a feature story by London "Daily Express" writer Rene MacColl.

He's notorious for the way in which he moulds facts and fancy. In a story featuring anti-Jagan propaganda he says of the U.S.A.:

> "The Ku Klux Klan is a joke instead of a threat. Lynchings are no more—Uncle Tom has vanished. "In the streets of Detroit and Washington you will see well-dressed coloured people driving expensive cars—their own cars. The Negro is doing well."

Contrast this second quotation in the same paper a few pages earlier by British M.P. Roy Jenkins:

> "The relative emancipation of the Negro is the most important. He still suffers many indignities."

This is the degree of reliability one can attach to MacColl's generalisations on Jagan and Guiana.

Oh Mr. MacColl, serve your masters more proficiently than this—I could!

Trinidad—What now?

POOR Bertie Gomes has panicked his friends in Whitehall. And does Oliver Lyttelton panic! Shame, but that Colonial Office job is a real hot seat.

From Churchill to Creech-Jones until to-day—the story is the same.

The Hon. Albert Gomes, M.L.C., Minister of Labour, knows something about the mood of the workers. He strung along for some years until—the parting of the ways—Gomes to fame and fortune, Trinidad, towards Independence.

Well, the "London Times" announced that Mr. F. W. Dalley is off to Port-of-Spain to conduct an informal survey of local labour relations.

Why not read "Caribbean News" We set the pace with up-to-date information. The West Indian Independence Party have been doing a fine job. They are established as a Party enjoying wide support throughout the land of the humming-bird. Gomes calls this progress, Communism.

Heigh-ho 1954—Is Dalley going to try to pull off a subtler deal than that used in Guiana? Lyttelton the Tory has failed and so the second strings are now called in. Do-the-dirty Dalley, you haven't got a chance.

Pritt for Guiana

D. N. PRITT, Q.C., is going to British Guiana to defend the two members of the P.P.P., Fred Bowman and Nasrudeen, charged with sedition. The trial begins on March 1st, and FUNDS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED to meet the bare minimum expenses of Mr. Pritt's air travel. For that eminent Barrister who has travelled from one end of the world to another wherever colonial people needed his legal aid, has magnanimously declined to charge for his legal services in this case.

This charge of sedition against two P.P.P. members is a test case which the imperialists must not be allowed to get away with. There is none better than D. N. Pritt for this occasion, but the P.P.P. cannot afford £400 at this time. THEY ARE DEPENDING ON YOU FOR THIS SUM. DO NOT FAIL THESE COURAGEOUS PEOPLE UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS OF GUIANA IN THEIR HOUR OF NEED. SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:Guiana Defence Fund, 16 Soho Square, London, W.1.

BOSSES UNDERSTAND THIS LANGUAGE

Kingston, Jamaica.

OVER 400 civilian employees at the War Department, Up-Park-Camp, went on strike here recently against the long delay in implementing the new wage rates and other improved working conditions agreed on by the Department and their union—the B.I.T.U., early last year.

The men disobeyed the Union leaders who were immediately on the scene and gave the "go back to work" command. It was not until the officials cabled the Head Office in London seeking approval for the wage contract to be ratified without further delay that they resumed working.

The resumption of work, however, does not mean the end of the struggle, for the men are angry and unless immediate action is taken on their demand strike action will be taken again.

Vincentians give Joshua Rousing Welcome

ON his return home to St. Vincent from the Third World Trade Union Congress (Vienna, 10th-21st October), Hon. E. T. Joshua, leader of the People's Political Party and member of the Legislative and Executive Councils of St. Vincent which ought to set the Colonial Office in Britain and their Vincentian stooges thinking.

In spite of Joshua's arrival at the early hour of 1.40 a.m. on Monday, 14/12/53, there were hundreds awaiting his landing and he was carried in procession through Kingstown to the singing of welcome songs. The first meeting in his constituency in Georgetown, St. Vincent was attended by over 10,000 persons. The meeting in Kingstown the capital, stopped traffic. A strongly worded protest resolution on the Guiana situation was passed. Plans have been made to hold a monster protest demonstration in the near future, to let Lyttelton and the British Government know in no uncertain manner of the indignation of West Indians against the fascist actions in Guiana.

LETTER BOX

WHERE WILL THE TIN GODS STAND?

THE EDITOR

AS the wife of a West Indian, I feel the right to express my horror of the outrageous colour bar practised in Bermuda, an island rightfully belonging to the coloured population as much as any other.

In a daily newspaper, I read that the bar must prevail because of the white tourist trade. And this is agreed to even by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Are these tourists so superior that they cannot mix with their fellowmen?

In Africa the situation is even worse. Can't these stupid people realise that at least 75% of the world's population is coloured. More and more each year are receiving proper education. When all these people revolt, where will the tin gods stand then in their judgment. Every person should help to make a world of peace and unity. The time is near when all will realise that the only race on earth is the Human Race.

MARJORIE AUSTIN,
Marlow, Bucks.

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★ Membership dues are 5/- per year payable either in one sum or in two instalments of 2/6d. each.

Register your indignation at Lyttelton's action against Guiana in a way that can help the campaign . . .

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Post to the Secretary, Caribbean Labour Congress (L.B.), 3 Robert Street, N.W.1.

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